



EU DRUG MARKETS REPORT

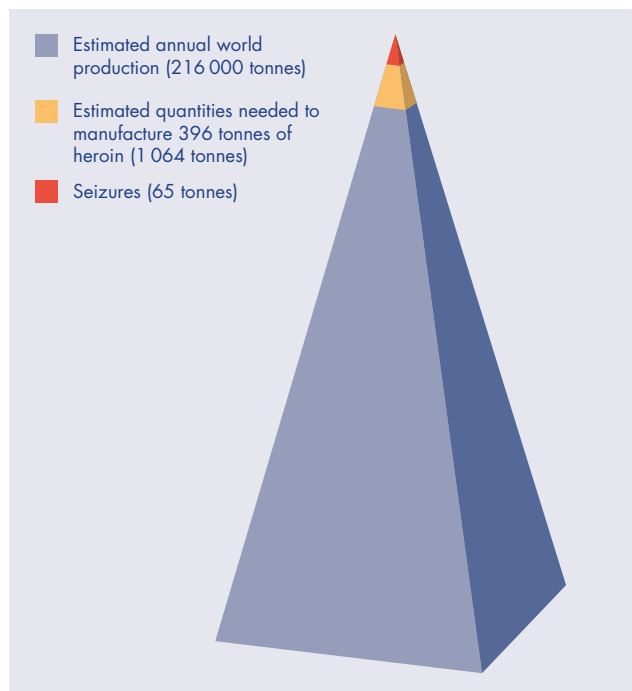
A STRATEGIC ANALYSIS

Case study 6

6.5 tonnes of heroin precursor seized

As a result of an intensive cooperation between Slovakia, Hungary and several other EU Member States, supported by Europol and Eurojust, 6.5 tonnes of acetic anhydride, a critical heroin precursor, were seized in Hungary on 5 April 2011 by Hungarian Police services.

Acetic anhydride: estimated annual world production, estimated requirements for heroin manufacture and seizures in 2010



Note: Between 1.08 and 4.32 kg of acetic anhydride is required to manufacture 1 kg of heroin (INCB, 2012a). Therefore, in 2010, between 417 and 1 711 tonnes (a mid-range point of 1 064 tonnes) of diverted acetic anhydride would have been needed to manufacture the 396 tonnes of heroin estimated to have been produced worldwide (UNODC, 2011a).

Sources: UNODC (2011a), INCB (2012a).

These efforts led to the dismantling of a major organised criminal group network heavily involved in acetic anhydride trafficking. Several house searches were successfully executed in the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Slovenia and the main suspects were arrested. The organised crime group concerned was involved in the trafficking of at least of 30 tonnes of the precursor.

The significance of the seizure was recognised in terms of the quantity involved and the amount of heroin that could have been manufactured had the consignment reached the heroin laboratories in Afghanistan, for which it was destined.

Europol supports several such multi-lateral operations and continues to target wider organised crime groups involved in this activity. Through analysis of case data a number of operational links were found and operational meetings were convened by Europol to exchange information in support of investigative teams in the field.

On an international level, the case was regarded as significant, and it was a follow-up from a recent 10-tonne seizure of acetic anhydride in Turkey that originated in the EU. In total, more than 30 tonnes of the precursor were seized by European law-enforcement authorities, supported by a Europol sub-project on heroin precursors.

